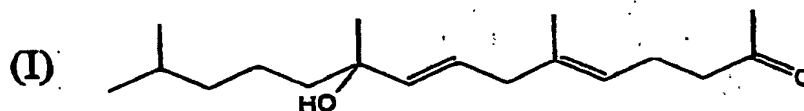


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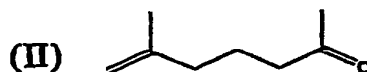
CLAIMS

1. Accordingly, the present invention provides a process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I)



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which comprises reacting a compound of formula (II)



with a compound of formula (III)



10 in the presence of a catalyst and a polar solvent.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1 in which the polar solvent is selected from dimethylformamide, dimethylacetamide, dimethylsulfoxide or N-methyl pyrrolidone

3. A process as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2 in which the catalyst is selected from cationic divalent ruthenium complexes such as cyclopentadienyl ruthenium hexafluorophosphate tris - acetonitrile, or pentamethyl-cyclopentadienyl ruthenium hexafluorophosphate tris - acetonitrile

4. A process as claimed in any one of the preceding claims carried out in the presence of a second solvent, said second solvent being immiscible with the first solvent.

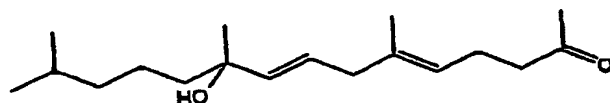
5. A process as claimed in claim 4 in which the second solvent is an apolar solvent selected from aliphatic or aromatic hydrocarbons.

6. A process as claimed in any one of the preceding claims carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 100°C and under atmospheric pressure.

7. Novel compound characterised by the following structure

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8. A process for the preparation of phytone which comprises (a) a first step of hydrolysing the compound as claimed in claim 7 to produce a hydrolysis product; and (b) a second step of hydrogenating the hydrolysis product of step (a)
9. A process as claimed in claim 8 wherein the first step is carried out in the presence of an acid catalyst selected from sulphonic acid, sulphuric acid and hydrogen chloride.
10. A process as claimed in any one of claim 8 or claim 9 in which the first step is carried out in the presence of an organic solvent selected from an organic hydrocarbon and an ether.
11. A process as claimed in any one of claims 8 to 10 in which the second step is carried out in the presence of hydrogen and a metal or metal salt selected from palladium or platinum, Raney nickel optionally in the presence of iron, manganese, cobalt, copper, zinc or chromium; zinc in the presence of acetic acid; stannous chloride; and molybdenum (III) salts.
12. A process as claimed in claim 11 wherein the catalyst is palladium supported on charcoal.

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